

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Parks and Recreation Commission convened in a regular meeting at 7:03 p.m. on Wednesday, May 10, 2006, in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. **SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Park Services Administrator Wilson.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Cook, Robbins, Smoot, Taniguchi, Tookey and Chairman McGee.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Recreation Services Administrator Jones, Park Services Administrator Wilson and Administrative Analyst Orpe.

4. **AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

MOTION: Commissioner Tookey moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner Taniguchi seconded the motion and a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 12, 2006**

Recreation Administrator Jones pointed out that the minutes needed to be amended to reflect the fact that Commissioner Robbins also received an excused absence.

MOTION: Commissioner Cook moved for the approval of the April 12, 2006 Parks and Recreation meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Taniguchi seconded the motion and a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

6a. **CAPITAL PROJECT STATUS**

Recreation Services Administrator Jones reported on the material of record explaining that staff had prioritized projects by health and safety issues.

Administrative Analyst Orpe indicated that funding sources were identified for capital projects including Open Space and Facility Funds, as well as Prop 12 funds which funded Lago Seco and Prop 40 funds which have been earmarked for McMaster Park.

Recreation Services Administrator Jones suggested designating 20% of the Open Space and Facility funds as a reserve for unforeseen circumstances and Administrative Analyst Orpe clarified that some funds were obligated to specific projects. He briefly summarized the material of record noting that although Wilson Park has funding to accomplish the project, in light of other projects it has not been a priority.

Commissioner Robbins received clarification that \$740,000 is still available in the Open Space fund to be awarded and Administrative Analyst Orpe indicated that the Park Security Lighting Project was a top priority as it is a safety issue. He explained that ten parks had been completed and 18 parks remained with a total of \$320,000-350,000 needed for the entire project.

Administrative Analyst Orpe reported that the 1999 estimate for Torrance Park was out of date and there had been a 5% increase to costs per year which would bring park development to over \$1 million. He added that the cost of playground equipment had increased which necessitated additional funds and he noted that upgrading park benches and tables was also considered a safety issue.

Commissioner Smoot observed that the total of items 1,4,5,7,8,10 equaled \$1,163,183, the amount listed on page 6A and she added that if the large projects are removed from the equation they mesh into the exact number without the reserve.

Recreation Services Administrator Jones recommended against funding the Wilson Park Landscape Project at this point as it would probably not happen soon and Commissioner Robbins observed that money did not seem available for projects 6-10. Administrative Analyst Orpe commented that Pueblo Park was deserving and could be considered for design, but Commissioner Robbins felt it might not be prudent to put design money into a project without an identified funding source.

Commissioners and staff discussed each project and agreed that Replacement of Playground Equipment and Benches and Picnic Tables were priorities as they are liability issues

Administrative Analyst Orpe explained that developers are required to pay a fee for each unit built which is split between the Open Space and Facilities Funds and Commissioner Tookey suggested setting priorities for those funds. He added that the Commission needed an updated estimate before they could consider the Torrance Park Redevelopment project as the costs had increased 30-40%.

Administrative Analyst Orpe indicated that staff would have to return with the real costs for Columbia and Torrance and Commissioner Robbins suggested directing staff to focus on items 1-5 and then come back to the Commission with additional information.

Recreation Services Administrator Jones suggested allocating the dollar value available less the 20% reserve to address Park Security Lighting, Playground Equipment

Replacement, and Park Bench and Table Replacement, with the remaining funds divided between Columbia Park and Torrance.

The Commission and staff discussed the importance of the remaining items and alternative funding sources for them and Administrative Analyst Orpe reported that the nature of grants had changed dramatically in the last 10 years with much of the funds diverted to national issues.

Commissioner Tookey suggested that staff look into funding the upgrade to the Plunge Facilities through school funds as high school programs have grown in recent years with four Torrance high schools regularly using the facilities and Recreation Services Administrator Jones agreed to look into the matter.

MOTION: Commissioner Robbins moved to direct staff to bring back recommendations for items 1-5 and to place other items on hold until additional funding is available. Commissioner Smoot seconded the motion and a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

7. **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

7a. **OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE**

No report.

7b. **FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

Chairman McGee reported that the Facilities Committee had met that day and they were working on the Hawaiian themed Awards Dinner scheduled for July 19. He noted that they were looking for additional awardees and that the Committee would meet again on June 14 with new member, Commissioner Robbins.

7c. **PROGRAMS COMMITTEE**

No report.

8. **MONTHLY DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY**

8a. **PARK SERVICES DIVISION**

Park Services Administrator Wilson indicated there was nothing further than the material of record

8b. **RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION**

Recreation Services Administrator Jones summarized the material of record noting that the Spring Boutique had been successful with a great turn out. He reported that in the past programming had driven maintenance which resulted in worn out fields and loss of income but now a program has begun to reduce programming to allow the grass time to recuperate. He added that they were in discussions with local AYSOs and Women's Soccer Leagues to make donations to help pilot a field renovation.

Chairman McGee observed that Skate Park Revenue is up and Recreation Services Administrator Jones noted a change in the way teams are structured for Roller Hockey to allow younger children to play on older teams but removing the option for older children to play on younger teams.

8c. **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION**

Administrative Analyst Orpe provided a short summary of the material of record noting that staff would be busy with the summer enrollment season. Commissioners agreed that they preferred data in table form rather than text form and Administrative Analyst Orpe agreed to provide a table with a three month trend.

9. **ORALS**

Patti Barnett, 606 Acacia Avenue, asked Commissioners and staff to consider alternative playground cover as her 8 year old daughter had suffered scratches and abrasions after a fall at Greenwood Park. She distributed photographs to Commissioners, she noted that wood chips were generally used to cushion falls from high places and she observed that wood chips were not wheelchair friendly. She added that she had spoken with others who objected to that type of ground cover, some of whom do not let their kids play at that park due to allergies aggravated by the ground cover.

Park Services Administrator Wilson indicated that wood is an approved surface according to Federal Guidelines and he cited problems associated with sand coverage including the fact that it requires extensive maintenance, attracts sand wasps, and cats like to dig in it. He added that the objective of the ground covering was to prevent major injuries such as head injuries rather than minor injuries and he noted that each type of surface had its drawbacks. He reported that Torrance had done much of the work to convert Lago Seco to a rubberized surface at a cost of about \$37,000, and he added that there are wood surfaces in 2-3 other parks.

Commissioner Robbins received clarification that the child had not fallen due to defective equipment.

Park Services Administrator Wilson reported that injuries from wood chips had not been brought to their attention before and replacing wood chips with sand would cost between \$1,000 and \$2,000. He agreed to bring different options to the next meeting.

Torrance Youth Council Member Jennifer Chun, West High School, invited Commissioners to attend the Beat the Odds Scholarship Awards Dinner on May 11 at the ATTiC beginning at 7 p.m. and she thanked Commissioner Smoot for helping paint cabinets. She announced a Car Wash at the ATTiC on Saturday, May 13 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Recreation Services Administrator Jones explained that the Beat the Odds scholarship provided money for college, he reported attending the Torrettes Drill Team

spectacular and he noted that the City Council had unanimously approved Torrance Beach as a non-smoking Beach.

Commissioner Tookey indicated that his family was participating in Little League at Lago Seco and he was impressed with the contractor and Recreation Services Administrator Jones indicated a tentative grand opening date in July.

Commissioner Robbins reported attending the dedication of the new garden at the nature center last month and he added that he had visited the tree house in Wilson Park and found it to be very accessible.

Commissioner Taniguchi extended best wishes to all mothers for Mother's Day on Sunday.

Commissioner Smoot was looking forward to the Beat the Odds Awards Dinner and she expressed regret that there had not been a report on the Madrona Marsh. She was pleased with the smoking ban and wanted to recommend that all parks be smoke free. She also thanked Ms. Barnett for coming forward with her pictures and concerns about wood chips and she expressed surprise at the injuries sustained from such a short fall.

Chairman McGee reminded everyone about the ATTIC Car Wash and the joint meeting on July 10 with the Library Commission adding that the Parks and Recreation Dinner would be held on July 19. He indicated that he would be attending the Beat the Odds Awards Dinner and he thanked Commissioner Smoot for helping select the winners.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:10 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, June 14, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

Approved as Submitted October 11, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
